INDEXA

Helping to Make DX Happen Since 1983

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A non-profit organization for the enhancement of amateur radio, worldwide peace, and friendship

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SPRATLY LAYANG LAYANG ISLAND—9M4SLL

By Steve Telenius-Lowe, 9M6DXX



The Team that brought you Spratly Islands pauses to display the colors.

The Spratly Islands lie in the South China Sea about half way between Vietnam and Borneo. The Philippines are to the east and, many hundreds of miles further north, is China. There is a Malaysian-run resort on Layang Layang Island that caters mainly to divers and offers comfortable accommodation.

The team that operated as 9M4SLL in March 2013 was John, 9M6XRO; James, 9V1YC; Don, G3BJ; Pista, HA5AO; George, HA5UK; Tony, KM0O; Ben, N6MUF, and me. In addition to being licensed by MCMC (the radio regulatory authority in Malaysia), all amateur radio operations from Layang Layang must also be approved by the Malaysian Security Council—a department of the Malaysian Prime Minister's office—due to the island's strategic location in the Spratly group. Photocopies of the team members' passport pages were sent to the Security Council along with a letter requesting approval for an amateur radio operation from Layang Layang Island. Eventually, after three and a half months, the letter of approval was received and the North American and European team members could book their flights to Kota Kinabalu in East Malaysia.

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inside... ***Meet INDEXA Director Bob Schenck, N2OO, Financial Help for DXpeditions, Wear an INDEXA Shirt, The fellowship of a DX-specific convention.***

SPRATLY LAYANG LAYANG ISLAND—9M4SLL (con'd)

(Continued from page 1)

On Sunday, March 10, the whole group met at 4:30am for the 50-minute flight to the island. Between us, we had 23 pieces of checked-in baggage weighing some 500kg. The plane was an ATR72 turbo-prop run by MASWings, a subsidiary of the national airline, MAS. Almost half of the cabin, as well as the hold, was taken up with our equipment and antennas.



We had booked the conference room at the resort to be used as the 'shack', the only place on the island large enough to accommodate a DXpedition of this size.

Before we could start operating, though, we needed to receive approval from the island's navy commander who, as the highest authority on the island, had the final say on our operation. He arrived back from a patrol in the afternoon, just as we had completed building the stations and putting up most of the antennas, and came to inspect the stations with two of his staff. Hands were shaken, photographs were taken, and we received permission to start the operation.

All the antennas at 9M4SLL were verticals and, apart from the Titanex, all were mounted within just a few feet of the salt water (pictured, above). The Titanex was located on a large area of grass adjacent to the conference room and still well within a quarter wavelength of the sea on 160m.

The other antennas were a Butternut HF6V, a Butternut HF6V-X with 12m/17m add-on kit and a Butternut HF2V, all with ground radials; separate quarter-wave verticals for 40, 30 and 17m, each with elevated radials, and a 12m vertical dipole. The two Hungarian operators brought a 12m-long Spiderbeam pole vertical which they used with an SGC SG-235 auto ATU. This was located in the rocks immediately above the salt water. The take-off was almost perfect, with salt water for hundreds of miles in the direction of North America and Europe providing additional low-angle gain for all the antennas.

We had five stations and attempted to keep all five on the air for as long as possible each day. The stations were: Elecraft K3 with Yaesu Quadra VL-1000 amplifier; K3 with Elecraft KPA500 amp, K3 with Icom IC-2KL amp, and two Elecraft K2 transceivers, each with Tokyo Hy-Power HL-1.2Kfx linears. Particular credit goes to our two low-band operators, John, 9M6XRO, and Don, G3BJ, who put 1311 QSOs in the log on 160m and 2119 on 80m despite levels of static that lesser operators would consider impossible to contend with.

A major solar disturbance had a marked effect on the number of QSOs we made. Despite this, the

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SPRATLY LAYANG LAYANG ISLAND—9M4SLL

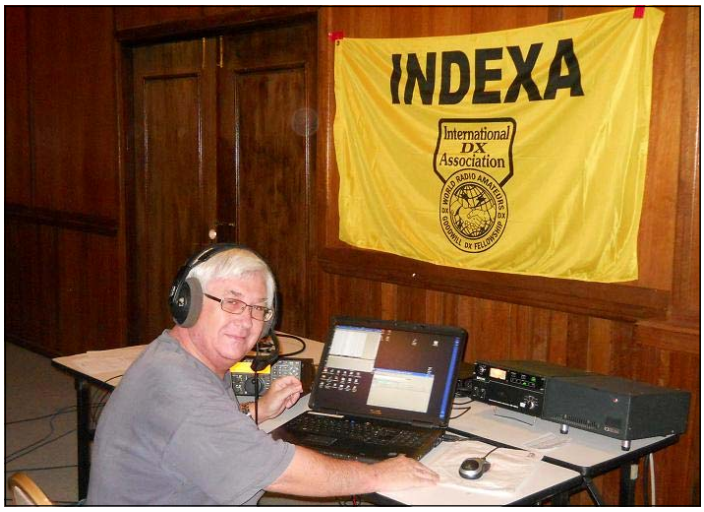
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final QSO total was 43,716 in a little under eight days on the air.

We wish to thank Layang Layang Island Resort staff in Kuala Lumpur and on the island for making our stay trouble-free and comfortable. Thanks also to QSL Manager Tim Beaumont, M0URX, who will be sending out 9M4SLL QSLs before the end of April. He also uploaded our logs to *Club Log* every day during the operation and our complete log to LoTW a couple of days after the DXpedition.

Finally, the 9M4SLL team wishes to send grateful thanks to the sponsors of this DXpedition: INDEXA, NCDXF, the Twin City DX Association, CDXC and the GMDX Group. Sincere thanks for helping to make this DXpedition a success.

—73, Steve Telenius-Lowe



With that INDEXA flag on the wall in front of Steve, 9M6DXX, operating on 20m SSB, surely he was looking out for INDEXA members. HI



The 9M4SLL QSL Card shows that there is just enough room to fit a runway on Spratly Layang Layang Island. For those mainlanders accustomed to wide open spaces to wander, the onset of "rock fever" is almost certain to occur within days if a protracted stay is required. A typhoon would certainly result in wet feet. ***(And, DXers get to stay in the comfort of their shack and earn DXCC credits.—The Editor)***

Do You Own an INDEXA Shirt?



In the Winter 2013 edition of the INDEXA Newsletter, we showed you some colorful t-shirts displaying the INDEXA logo. A small logo is on the left chest, and a large logo is on the back. These shirts are far more colorful than the black lettering on white shirts that INDEXA produced and sold until about 2006. The current edition of the shirt is produced by Glenn Rollins, N0IDX. Glenn has graciously donated Official INDEXA shirts to the Amsterdam Island DXpedition Team so they can sport the INDEXA colors. Look for the Official DXpedition shirt on the FT5ZM website photo pages when the DXpedition is finally underway. The special edition shirt is only available for the Team, but you can have your very own shirt of the type pictured above. Shown in the photo is the back of the shirt. (Note: Callsign on the sleeve is no longer offered.) Shirts are 100% cotton with a silkscreened logo. Large, X-Large and XX-Large sizes are available. Cost is $21.00 shipped anywhere in the Continental United States. Add $3.00 for the XX-Large size.

Email and PayPal to n0idx@comcast.net. All sales ship next business day. Check, money order and PayPal accepted.

(Note: This offering is made by an independent businessman, Glenn Rollins. Permission to use the INDEXA logo on this clothing has been granted by INDEXA.)

How can YOU provide financial help to DXpeditions?

John Scott, K8YC
Vice President & Editor, INDEXA

It is nearing the end of eight years that I've been editing the stories of the DXpeditions that INDEXA sponsors with your support. In reading those reports, and in my role as an officer of INDEXA I've gained much insight into many aspects of DXpedition organization and operation. In the past year or two there has been much written in Amateur Radio publications about the cost of conducting a DXpedition. Some articles have interviewed radio amateurs to find out why they do or do not provide financial support for DXpeditions. Some of those interviewed have stated they don't feel it necessary to give money to a group going on a "vacation" to operate a ham radio. While there is surely a great "rush" from being on the working end of a pileup, there are many aspects of being on a DXpedition that are analogous to standing in a cold shower and tearing up $100 bills!

DXpeditions to the top sixty to eighty DXCC entities often have very large budgets. This is because they are usually very difficult to get to—often requiring a chartered boat because airports are non-existent. It is not uncommon for EACH member of a DXpedition team to personally ante $4,000 to $8,000 of their own money to be a member of the team, and this does NOT include the transportation costs to get to the kickoff point of the actual DXpedition. (For one DXpedition in the past decade, the team member cost was about $18,000!) And for that down payment, the operators take time off work to go to someplace that may be extremely hot, extremely cold, or extremely windy and operate a radio for four hours, rest for eight hours, do some needed chores to keep the operation running, fight off ticks, land crabs or other vermin and then repeat the cycle for 8 to 12 days. Hardly a vacation, in my mind. Yet, if these DXpeditioners didn't make this choice, there would be far fewer of us well on their way to earning DXCC Honor Roll status.

Financial support of DXpeditions provided by associations like INDEXA do not defray the biggest portion of DXpedition costs, but it can be helpful in supplying seed money to get the ball rolling. Also, we are told by DXpedition organizers that support from the more recognized associations lends credibility that assists with fundraising activities once the amateur radio community is made aware of an upcoming DXpedition. Because of the increasing costs of conducting a DXpedition to a rare locale, funding "after the fact" from donations arriving with QSL cards is a gamble that organizers are increasingly unwilling to take. By being a member of INDEXA, you are assured support is going only to the top 60 of the most needed entities and that the organizers of the effort are deemed capable of running a successful DXpedition.

There is something YOU as a member of INDEXA can do to help and in doing it, you'll double the funds available for supporting DXpeditions. All each member of INDEXA needs to do is to encourage ONE fellow DXer to join INDEXA. Or, if feeling thankful for the help of a friend in your DXing pursuits, give him/her a gift membership in INDEXA for 2014. Then in our 31st year in 2014, INDEXA will be able to provide a higher level support to DXpeditions to the more needed DXCC entities. Information to join INDEXA can be found at http://www.indexa.org. PayPal is available for remitting dues payments. Will you lend a hand?

Meet INDEXA Director Bob Schenck, N2OO

(This is the first of several articles introducing you to the Directors of INDEXA. Over the next several issues, we want you to learn more about those people providing guidance to INDEXA's future. —The Editor)

Bob was first licensed in February 1965 as WN2RJJ. He was first initiated into ham radio during the Novice Roundup! CW came naturally for Bob. In April of the same year at the age of 14, Bob upgraded to general class becoming WB2RJJ. Once he upgraded, he would quickly become interested in HF activities including contests, DX-chasing and traffic handling. In 1976 Bob upgraded to extra class and in 1977 changed his call to N2OO.

Bob's keen interest in DXpeditions started when he befriended Ray Brown, ZL4LR/a on the air from Campbell Island in 1978. During nightly skeds, Chuck ZL1ADI, offered to assist Bob with helping Ray work people. Chuck just happened to be involved in a DXpedition being planned for the Spratly Islands with Harry Meade, VK2BJL. Bob offered to assist from the USA and ended up joining the team. Bob coordinated USA support along with team partner Stew Woodward, K4SMX. The team met in Brunei in March 1979 and set sail for Amboyna Cay on the ketch Banyandah. After 2 ½ days sailing the calm waters of the South China Sea, the team (VK2BJL, K4SMX, K1MM, N2OO, N4WW, KP2A) arrived at Amboyna Cay. What was thought to be an uninhabited 900 foot wide sand cay, was found to have an encampment on it. After a short time sitting less than a mile off shore, a gun emplacement fired 4 mortar rounds at the sailboat. Luckily, all missed and the boat retreated back to Brunei. After some research at the library in Brunei, a couple of other possible operating sites were selected and 3 team members (K4SMX, VK2BJL and K1MM) decided to head out again. Bob and John KP2A decided to remain in Brunei to provide better communications with the crew on the boat and to mount a backup operation from Brunei. Bob was VS5OO and this would become Bob's very first major DXpedition operation making 10,000 QSO's operating solo for 10 days. At that time, Brunei was a fairly rare DX location with little activity. The 3 team members who went for the second attempt found an uninhabited island and put 1S1DX on the air for 70 hours making over 13,000 QSO's. Bob has returned to Brunei several times over the years making many DXers worldwide very happy. In 1999, Bob was an honored guest at the SEANET Convention in Brunei where he was credited with helping expand interest in Amateur Radio in Brunei over the years.

In 1980 Bob organized a DXpedition (9M6MU with team N2OO, N2CW, KP2A,VS5TX) to East Malaysia where he befriended the team's host Alfons Undan, 9M6MU. East Malaysia was also a fairly rare DX location at that time. Bob and Alfons spoke about the possibility of opening up his home to visiting hams from around the world. In 1997, Alfons would finally create this dream by building the Hillview Gardens Resort with a direct focus on ham radio. A club station was created (9M6AAC/9M6A) and hams were invited to visit the resort. Bob's efforts in support of this station has made 9M6 a fairly common DXCC country over the years. Since opening in 1997, the station has made well over 200,000 QSO's.

With local support in Sabah, Bob was also able to organize two very successful DXpeditions to the Spratly Islands (9M6OO/p in 1997 and 1999).

Over the years that followed that infamous 1979 Spratly operation, Bob organized and/or participated in many DXpeditions. He also has been a very active QSL manager handling over 150 calls including the recent 3Y0X, VU7RG, K5D, HK0NA and the upcoming FT5ZM mega-DXpeditions.

In 2001, Bob organized the QSL Manager's Society. This is a web based point of contact for "quality" QSL Managers to offer their services. All members must agree to a "QSL Manager's Creed" which includes QSLing via the bureau, etc. http://www.qsl.net/qslmanagers

One of the reasons Bob organized the "Society" was because of his personal frustration hearing about other QSL managers "closing" logs. He felt that all DX logs are part of our DX heritage and should be preserved, and QSL cards should continuously be made available. QSL Manager's Society members pledge to

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Meet INDEXA Director Bob Schenck, N2OO, (con'd)

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make sure that family members know what to do with any logs and blank cards if the ham in the family becomes a silent key. If no one locally is available, they can contact the Society for transfer of the logs/cards.

In March 2003, Bob was approached by Bob Young, K4JDJ. He was moving in a couple of weeks and he needed to off load all the logs and blank cards that he had accumulated as a busy QSL Manager. K4JDJ had taken over all of the QSL managing duties from John Parrott, W4FRU, after he became a silent key. There turned out to be 60 logs and over 100,000 blank QSL cards. All of the logs were paper logs. These were all heading to the trash if no one offered to take them over. Among these were some major operations including VK0IR, E30GA, FB8WJ, etc. Bob and friend Skip N1IBM drove down to Virginia and filled the bed of a pickup truck with all of the boxes of logs and QSL cards. Upon returning to his home, Bob sorted them out and divided the logs and cards among 13 QSL Manager Society members thus saving all of the logs collected from being trashed. Since that time, Bob has redirected many other older DX logs.

In 2008 Bob was inducted into the CQ DX Hall of Fame. Bob's dedication to the DX world encompasses many different directions—DXpeditioner, Contester, QSL Manager. Yet he still finds time to actively participate in local ham radio organizations; always promoting and informing them about the world of DX.

Bob has been on over 40 DX and IOTA DXpeditions since 1979. He is a QSL Manager for over 150 calls. He helped to organize and run several DX amateur radio organizations over the years including the South Jersey DX Association, the International DX Foundation (IDXF), and the QSL Manager's Society. Bob's ongoing support and presence in Sabah (9M6OO) and Brunei (V85OO) has made these countries relatively easy ones to work; not only through his own operations, but through his ongoing friendships and support given to ham radio in those areas.

In 2012, Bob was elected to the Board of Directors of the International DX Association (INDEXA).

Scenes from SEDCO/W4DXCC

Each year conferences are held at regional locales specifically to appeal to the interests of DXers and Contesters. Names like Visalia, W9DXCC, and SEDCO are well known both regionally and nationally to aficionados of DXing and contesting. Attendees do not restrict themselves to only local conventions, giving those who normally meet "on the air" a chance to meet a person face to face. Needless to say, the camaraderie is contagious. Below are some scenes taken at the September 2013 SEDCO/W4DXCC conference held in Pigeon Forge, TN. (Photos courtesy of David Bower, K4PZT)

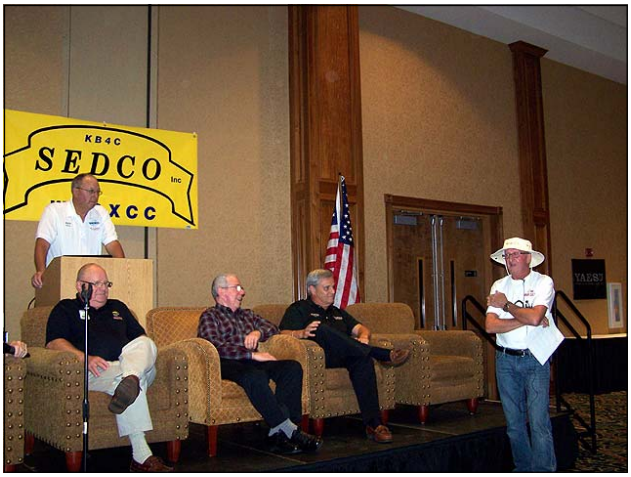


SEDCO co-founder Lynn Lamb, W4NL, relinquished the reins to Dave Anderson, K4SV for 2013 and beyond.

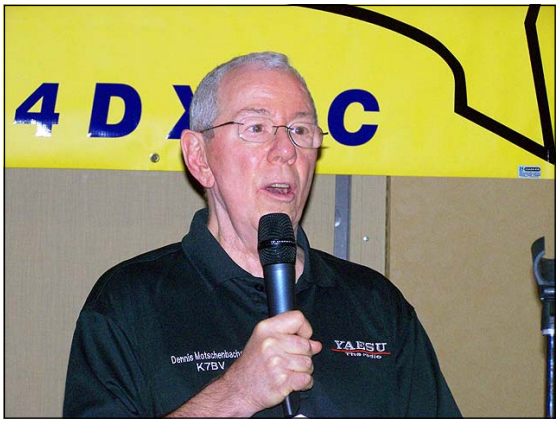


Card checking? Of course. Gary Dixon (K4MQG), Don Search (W3AZD), and Dan Henderson (N1ND) performed admirably.

Scenes from SEDCO/W4DXCC



Above: Joe Pater (W8GEX) draws out humorous happenings on DXpeditions from K4ZLE, K7BV, and N2TU while K4SV can only smile. Below: K7BV relates Yaesu's contribution to restore the radio station of Thailand's National radio organization following floods that destroyed all equipment.





Above: Five members of the CQ DX Hall of Fame: K4MQG, W4NL, N4XP, K4UEE, and N4AA. (Four were INDEXA Board members or officers when this photo was taken.) Below: Bob Allphin explains the financial realities of organizing DXpeditions in the 21st century.



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